

Press Release

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ASTA to Fund Vector Inc. Controller R&D

The Arkansas Science & Technology Authority (ASTA) has entered into a funding agreement with Vector Inc. of Fayetteville to produce a low cost, open-architecture machine tool controller.

The Authority's Board of Directors approved \$50,000 in funding for the GENESIS incubator firm during a regularly scheduled quarterly meeting. Total estimated cost for the project is \$111,175, with Vector responsible for the balance, \$61,175.

An open-architecture machine tool controller "is a mechanism that regulates or guides the operation of a machine or apparatus," Julie Welch, Authority Research Program manager, said. "The Vector project utilizes a personal computer-based microprocessor to direct a tool to perform action on a work piece. The key technical advantage to this technology is the use of open-architecture software on an external personal computer that operates as the processor for the operation."

According to Vector, the technology offers several advantages over its major competitors, including:

- an increase in the cutting speed of the machine tool;
- an unlimited programming code size;

- a blended acceleration profile that combines linear and circular segment commands;
- the ability to move the cutter in a helical configuration;
- a two-step feedback loop;
- an improved capability and extensibility for the addition of control modules such as machine tool chatter control and laser materials processing adaptive control.

Vector's business plan calls for a Northwest Arkansas-based production facility, with company projects that include the addition of six employees per year for the first five years and a staff of over 30 by 1999.

The Arkansas Science & Technology Authority serves as a statewide funding resource for high quality scientific and technological projects. The Authority endeavors to bring the benefits of science and technology to the people and state of Arkansas through scientific research, technology development, business innovation and education.

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